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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 000662

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF BOSNIA PIC MEETING

REF: A. SARAJEVO 435

[1](#)B. MOSCOW ?

[1](#)C. MOSCOW 539

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Alice G. Wells

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The MFA expressed satisfaction that the February 26-27 Bosnia Peace Implementation Council (PIC) meeting (ref A) had provided "a clear picture" of the benchmarks to be completed prior to the closure of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), but stressed that Russia still wanted to see the office closed by the end of the year (ref B). The GOR was concerned by reports of a letter threatening the Bosnian Embassy in Moscow (and a similar letter to the Albanian Embassy) and was taking steps to ensure security of the Embassies, but objected to Bosnian PM Silajdzic's press accusation that "some in Russian government, media and academic circles, were conducting anti-Bosnian and anti-Muslim campaigns." Bosnia's Ambassador to Russia continues to express concern over GOR efforts to make Bosnia pay the price for Kosovo's independence. End summary.

PIC Outcome Praised

[1](#)2. (C) In a meeting March 6, MFA Bosnia desk chief Ivan Gorbunov told us the GOR was satisfied with the results of the PIC meeting, stressing that Dayton had to continue to be the basis for the situation in Bosnia, and that any amendment had to be done by all BiH parties. He said Russia believed there was now a clear-cut, realistic plan towards realization of closure of the OHR, but stressed that Russia still wanted to see the office closed by the end of the year. He said that success depended greatly on the EU's ability to reach agreement on the transition, but the key final step would be signing of an EU SAA with Bosnia.

[1](#)3. (C) Gorbunov said Russia shared concerns at RS PM Dodik's inflammatory rhetoric, but noted that it was not surprising for the RS to seek to use the precedent of Kosovo's declaration of independence. He noted that with the split in the HDZ party, the Croatian faction was weaker and felt more threatened.

Threatening Letter Received

[1](#)4. (C) Gorbunov said MFA State Protocol had met with the Bosnian Ambassador to assure him that Russia's security services were taking all necessary steps to protect the Bosnian Embassy in light of the reports of a letter received by the Bosnian Embassy in Moscow threatening to kill all

Bosnian citizens in Moscow and destroy the Embassy by the end of 2008, because of Kosovo (the hand-written letter, which Bosnian Ambassador Enver Halilovic gave us a copy of, also included a swastika and the words "Good Luck, Heil Hitler!").

Gorbunov said the Albanian Embassy had received a similar letter. He decried, however, Silajdzic's reported statement asserting anti-Bosnian and anti-Muslim campaigns by some circles in Russia. He did not know if there would be a formal reaction by the MFA, but said there was no anti-Bosniak feeling in the Ministry, and the Russian media was mostly silent on the situation in Bosnia.

Post-Kosovo Machinations

15. (C) Gorbunov clarified that in his visit to Belgrade February 25 (ref C), president-elect Medvedev had not met separately with Dodik, but that Dodik had been part of the meeting with Serbian PM Kostunica and "about 10 minutes" had been devoted to him. Gorbunov stressed that the main purpose of the trip was trade and energy-related. Gorbunov also disclaimed knowledge of a reputed statement by Russian NATO Ambassador Rogozin in the Belgrade press indicating that the RS was entitled to secession, as a result of the "Kosovo precedent." But, he noted, it reflected Russia's long-held position that Kosovo independence would embolden other separatist regions to seek independence.

16. (C) In a March 7 meeting, Ambassador Halilovic expressed concern over what he viewed as concerted Russian efforts to make Bosnia pay the price for Kosovo's independence through increased Russian encouragement of Republika Srpska (RS) separatism. He pointed to Medvedev's meeting with Dodik as

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proof of Russia's biased approach to the Federation, noted a February 18-19 conference in Banja Luka under the aegis of the Russian Orthodox Church that was facilitated by Gazprom aircraft, and cited inflammatory statements on Russian state-controlled television encouraging RS independence as the natural consequence of Kosovo. Halilovic noted that he is constrained in protesting GOR actions given the absence of instructions from (or consensus in) Sarajevo.

RUSSELL